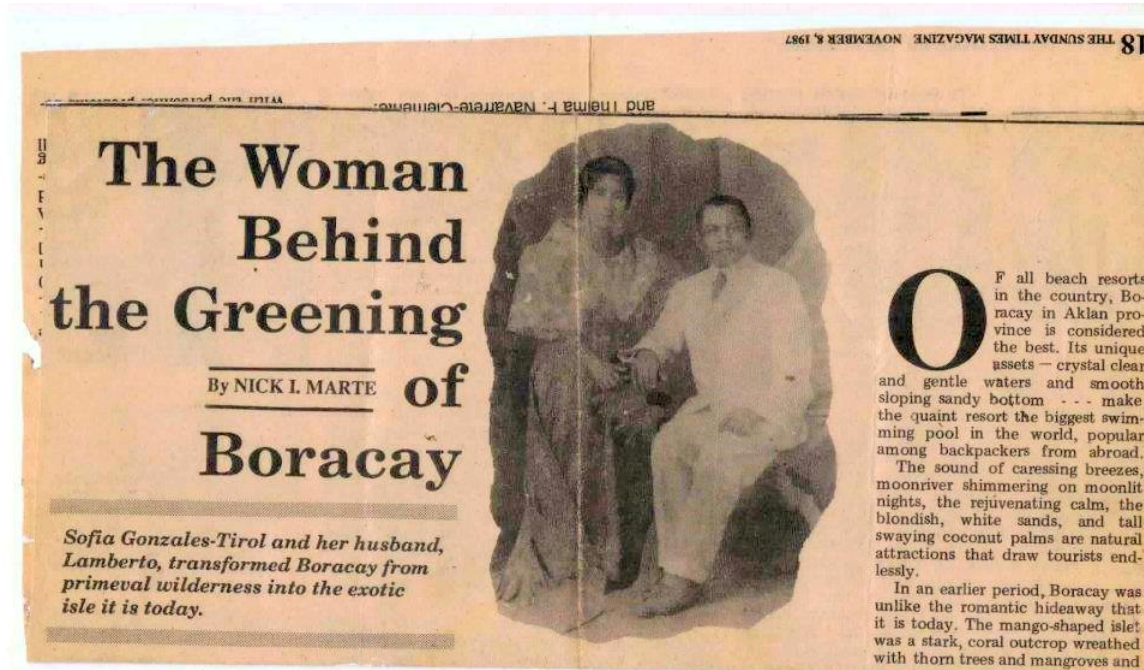


The Woman Behind The Greening of Boracay  
 Nick I. Marte  
 The Sunday Times Magazine  
 November 8, 1987



Reprint in a Western Visayas Local Paper

**BORACAY ISLAND**  
 HAVEN OF THE HEREDEROS DE LAMBERTO HONTIVEROS  
 TIROL Y SOFIA NER GONZALES


**DEDICATION**

To our grandparents- Don Lamberto and Doña Sofia- for the legacy you have left us. We shall always treasure your memory in our hearts. May the memory the true blue-blooded Lamber and Sofing Tirol live on and inspire all future children of the clan to follow suit of the legacy love from us all.

By:  
 Jing Tirol - Andan and the rest of the Hijos de Tirol clan of Aklan, Davao and Manila.

To our greatgrandparents- Thank you for the legacy you have imparted to your descendants for it is Lola Sofia the greener of Boracay together with one ever intelligent Lolo Lamber who inspired us to be what we are now- a birthright which we will all be forever proud of. Thank you Lola Sofing and Lolo Lamber for being the kinfolks' inspiration and finally, above all, for being mine.

By:  
 Atty. Aiu Tirol Andan daughter of Dr. Virly and Jing Tirol Andan.



The woman behind the greening of Boracay Doña Sofia Ner Gonzales Tirol and her husband Don Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol transformed Boracay from primeval wildflowers into the exotic isle it is today. Being well off and owning a big portion of the island husband and wife team was known to have paved the way and developed Boracay Island now known as Paradise Island.

(Reprinted from the Sunday Times Magazine, November 8/87)  
 By NICK I. MARTE

1. Agacel Gonzales Tirol ♂ (-) m. Jama Marte
  1. Diana Tirol Marte ♀ (-) m. Thomas Villanueva
  2. Hector Tirol Marte ♀ (-)
  3. Mia Tirol Marte ♀ (-)
  4. Barcelot Tirol Marte ♀ (-)
  5. Vilma Tirol Marte ♀ (-)
2. Ruben Gonzales Tirol ♀ (-)
3. Demetrio Gonzales Tirol ♂ (-) m. Sylvia Gonzales
  1. Dem Gonzales Tirol ♀ (-)
  2. Leo Neil Gonzales Tirol ♀ (-)
4. Elise Edna Gonzales Tirol ♀ (-) m. Ramon Kimpo
  1. Amalia Tirol Kimpo ♀ (-)
  2. Barbara Kimpo ♀ (-) m. Ricardo Villanueva
    1. John Gerald Villanueva ♀ (-)
    2. Eriline Barbara Villanueva ♀ (-)
    3. Richard Walter Villanueva ♀ (-)
  3. Juan Ramon Tirol Kimpo ♂ (-) m. Haydee Vilabert
    1. Krene Christine Kimpo ♀ (-)
    2. John Ryan Kimpo ♀ (-)
  4. Mary Ann Tirol Kimpo ♀ (-) m. Ali Al-Sheri
  5. Philip Tirol Kimpo ♀ (-)
  6. Ramon Juan Kimpo Jr. ♂ (-) m. Beth Bazon
    1. Phia Kimpo ♀ (-)
    2. Buel Kimpo ♀ (-)
  7. Theina Tirol Kimpo ♀ (-) m. Benjamin Pangariban
    1. Benjamin Pangariban ♀ (-)
    2. Concepcion Pangariban ♀ (-)
    3. Justine Pangariban Pangariban ♀ (-)
    4. Juliano Pangariban ♀ (-)
    5. Matias Pangariban ♀ (-)
    6. Ramon Pangariban ♀ (-)
5. Florentina Tirol ♀ (-)
6. Hades Gonzales Tirol ♂ (-) m. Jose Soldum
  1. Aless Tirol Soldum ♂ (-) m. Edna Apolonio
    1. Andrew James Apolonio Soldum ♀ (-)
    2. Candy Apolonio Soldum ♀ (-)
    3. Sarah Apolonio Soldum ♀ (-)
  2. Hades Tirol Soldum ♀ (-)
  3. Jose Tirol Soldum Jr. ♀ (-)
  4. Louder Tirol Soldum ♀ (-)
  5. Mia Sophia Tirol Soldum ♀ (-)
  6. Emiliano Tirol Soldum ♀ (-)
  7. Bonette Tirol Soldum ♀ (-) m. Tony Aster
7. Josef Gonzales Tirol Sr. ♂ (-) m. Lolita Amoroso Denosta
  1. Gabriel Denosta Tirol ♂ (-) m. Meredith Talamcan
    1. David King Tirol ♀ (-)
    2. Riser Talamcan Tirol ♀ (-)
    3. Shane Talamcan Tirol ♀ (-)
    4. Roseana Talamcan Tirol ♀ (-)
    5. Sofia Augie Talamcan Tirol ♀ (-)
  2. Jessica Denosta (Tirol) Tirol Andan ♀ (-) m. Viv Andan
    1. Jodine Tirol Andan ♀ (-)
    2. Kenneth Tirol Andan ♀ (-)
  3. Jacelyn Denosta Tirol ♀ (-) m. Prospero Dignos
    1. Kurt Dignos ♀ (-)
    2. Pochy Anne Tirol Dignos ♀ (-)
    3. Pochy James Tirol Dignos ♀ (-)
    4. Prospero Tirol Dignos III ♀ (-)
  4. Josef Denosta Tirol Jr. ♀ (-)
  5. Roberto Denosta Tirol ♂ (-) m. Angelina De Martin
    1. Angelica de Martin Tirol ♀ (-)
    2. Debra Kaye De Martin Tirol ♀ (-)
    3. Bachel Tirol ♀ (-)
    4. Robert Dan Tirol ♀ (-)
    5. Robert Van Tirol ♀ (-)
8. Bizaina Gonzales Tirol ♀ (-) m. Grasiano Sojo
  1. Arthur Tirol Sojo ♀ (-)
  2. Orfeo Tirol Sojo ♀ (-)
  3. Tecilia Tirol Sojo ♀ (-)
9. Sal Gonzales Tirol ♂ (-) m. Bernardo Carpio
  1. Antonio Tirol Carpio ♀ (-) m. Beth Nguyen
    1. Andrew Nguyen Carpio ♀ (-)
    2. Ronald Nguyen Carpio ♀ (-)
  2. Carissa Tirol Carpio ♀ (-) m. Bernardo Dimacali
    1. Priscilla Grace Dimacali ♀ (-)
    2. Victoria Grace Dimacali ♀ (-)
  3. Dennis Tirol Carpio ♀ (-) m. Martha Ford
    1. David Carpio ♀ (-)
    2. Philip Carpio ♀ (-)
  4. Florida Tirol Carpio ♀ (-)
  5. Judy Anne Tirol Carpio ♀ (-) m. Edmundo Prantila
    1. Edmundo Prantila ♀ (-)
    2. Joseph Prantila ♀ (-)
    3. Paul Prantila ♀ (-)
  6. Solomon Tirol Carpio ♀ (-) m. Cynthia Benas
    1. Adrian Carpio ♀ (-)
    2. Mon Amado Carpio ♀ (-)
    3. Minique Carpio ♀ (-)
  7. Susan Tirol Carpio ♀ (-) m. Harbert Frey
    1. Michelle Frey ♀ (-)

And

Reprinted in the Memorabilia of “Los Herederos de Don Lamberto Hontiveros Tirol y Sofia Ner Gonzales”

# The Woman Behind the Greening of Boracay

By NICK I. MARTE

*Sofia Gonzales-Tirol and her husband, Lamberto, transformed Boracay from primeval wilderness into the exotic isle it is today.*



Of all beach resorts in the country, Boracay in Aklan province is considered the best. Its unique assets—crystal clear and gentle waters and smooth sloping sandy bottom — make the quaint resort the biggest swimming pool in the world, popular among backpackers from abroad.

The sound of caressing breezes, moonriver shimmering on moonlit nights, the rejuvenating calm, the blondish, white sands, and tall swaying coconut palms are natural attractions that draw tourists endlessly.

In an earlier period, Boracay was unlike the romantic hideaway that it is today. The mango-shaped islet was a stark, coral outcrop wreathed with thorn trees and mangroves and inhabited by aboriginal Negritos who subsisted on its bounty.

It was Lola Sofing and her husband, Lamberto Tirol, a town judge, who "discovered" the islet during one summer day in the early 1910's and transformed the haunting wilderness into an exotic isle.

The Tirol couple took on a title of ownership over a substantial tract. While her husband was away dispensing justice in another town, Lola Sofing brought in laborers from the mainland to clear the primeval debris. She then started the greening of Boracay by planting fruit trees, particularly coconuts, on the open land.

The cultivation spread as other new comers came and refurbished their part of the islet. A native community formed. Since her first trek, a track of footsteps have followed Lola Sofing's trail on the virginal sands of Boracay. According to 1986 local figures, some 18,000 tourists (mostly foreigners from Europe) were Boracay visitors.

Sofia Gonzales-Tirol or Lola Sofing, as she is fondly called by kin, is all of 108 years old this year. She was born on April 1, 1879 in Salinas, Cavite, child of a Chinese mestiza Tagala mother, Florentina Ner and a Visayan father, Cipriano Gomez-Gonzales, the first Doctor of Kalibo. Her parents resided briefly in the Santa Cruz district of Manila where she spent a happy childhood. The family then moved to Kalibo to reside there permanently.

Orphaned at an early age, Lola Sofing was raised by an elder brother, Nicanor, once a Katipunero leader. He was, by nature, stern and domineering. Sofing felt oppressed in her brother's home and to escape from his strict care, she decided to marry at age 16 to Lamberto, scion of a landed clan in Ibaday. She bore him nine children but two died in infancy.

Following her husband's demise in the late 1930's, Lola Sofing's life took on a new vigor seeing to the education of her seven surviving children and administering the coconut plantation in Boracay. The fluctuating prices of copra has always determined the prosperity of coconut-dependent livelihood in Aklan and her widowed existence shifted along with the rise and fall of her products.

According to her daughter, Araceli Tirol-Martinez, her mother led a rocky life that spanned three great world turmoils: the Spanish-American War and the First and Second World Wars. Of these historic events, she has some vivid recollections of her life, particularly during the American invasion of Cavite in 1898. When that short-lived war broke out, she was a budding teenager.

She recalls unforgettable bits of that historic incident: she was awakened at break of dawn by reverberating, sharp explosions coming from American warships firing broadsides at the hapless Spanish Armada anchored at Manila Bay. Noisy shelling was also heard from the seaside Spanish fort in what is known as Sangley Point.

She recalls with amusement her first encounter with the American troops who landed a few days later. A Yank, slogging through the street, exclaimed, "Oh, pickaninny-mucho guapita." Soldiers started throwing coins to the curious crowd and Lola Sofing enthusiastically picked up some.

The ancestral family of Lola Sofing is well-known for their great survival power. An aunt died at the ripe age of 115. Her elder brother, Nicanor, passed away at age 91. Old age has inevitably caught up with the woman behind the greening of Boracay.

Now, Lola Sofing is living in her daydreams more than before. She spends her waning days in bed after more than a century of a hectic life.

At present, she stays in the residence of her daughter Araceli in New Buswang, a Kalibo suburb.

"My mother has made a lot of sacrifices," Araceli said, "having been orphaned and then a widow left to raise seven children."

Age-weary, her senile mind now and then wanders back into memory lanes of yesteryears. Even as she closes her eyes, heavy with the load of time, she intones snatches of imagined conversations with her memory's ghosts. Recalling, perhaps, the good times in her life in Boracay.

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Tuesday, July 08, 1980

Boracay - Etymology

Isla de Boracay, Malay, Aclan

The origin of this tropical resort's name captures some interest.

Many would say that Boracay was derived from the word borac, a local term which means cotton. Either cotton used to grow in this island in large quantities, or its powdery white sands had something to do with it.

Another is that the name dates back to the time when Spaniards came ashore and picked up shells. Meeting with the Atis later, the Spaniards were told that Sigay is the name of those shells. When the Spaniards ask the Atis were planting, they were told boray, a certain vegetable seed. From boray and sigay came the name Boracay.

Other accounts would say that Boracay was from the native term boay meaning vegetable seeds. It was said that Aeta tribes in the past used to plant vegetables within the island.

Some would also claim that the island was named in part from the word sigay, a type of seashell (could this be the rare puka shell?)

Finally, documented origin would reveal that Boracay originated from the word bora or bubbles. It is because of the foamy appearance that the waves make when it softly crashes onto the whitish sands. No less than the natives themselves said that as far in time as their memory as one of the original settlers and natives of Malay and Buruanga, the island which is now known as "Boracay" had no name before until a couple blurted out of their personal conversation about the froath and foam of the oceans of boracay. Malay was a part of Buruang or was only a barrio or barangay of the municipality of Buruanga, and people merely called the place "Ro Isla it Buruanga". The name "Boracay" was first given to a very tiny island off the northern tip of the "Isla" by a native upon hearing conversation between a couple, now known to be the Father and Greener of the island of Boracay - Lamberto and Sofia.

Folks have it told that many years ago, the couple came to settle at the northern coast of the "Isla" now known as Yapak, as Yapak was a barrio discovered by Lamberto himself, to engage in planting and selling tobacco leaves as their means of livelihood.

A mananggete (tuba-gatherer) was approaching the couple when he overheard a conversation between the couple at their dwelling. Lamberto was at the beach or in the beach water as he observed thick froath being washed ashore by the waves that clased between the tiny island and the "Isla" agitated by the Amihan wind.

Observing this thick froath, he called out to Sofia and said "Acay, hanggod ka bora, Acay," which when translated can mean: "Darling, there's plenty of froath, Darling."

Perhaps this is the origin of Boracay, derived from "Bora. Acay". And that name stuck for the tiny island. Much later, the name was given to the bigger island instead of calling it "Ro Isla it Buruanga."

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